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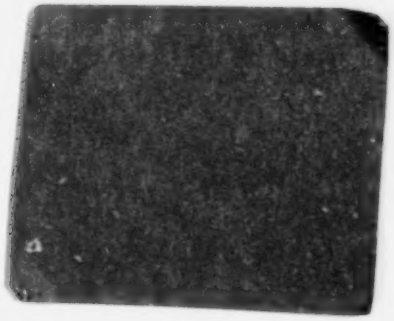
LETTER FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE FIRST SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AND AN APPEAL TO THE CONFERENCE FROM THE STATE DUMA OF THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

I have the honour to transmit to you a message from the President of the Russian Federation to the first session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and a message to the Conference from the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.

Please take the necessary steps to ensure that these documents are issued as official documents of the Conference on Disarmament and distributed to delegations of all States members of the Conference and those of non-member States of the Conference which are participating in its work.

(Signed) Grigory V. Berdennikov
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of the Russian
Federation to the Conference on Disarmament



THE PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

To the first session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

I send sincere greetings to the first session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The entry into force on 29 April 1997 of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the aim of which is the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, is being marked with satisfaction in Russia. This treaty was the outcome of many years of work by the entire international community, in which our country was an active participant. The principal task of the current session is to ensure the safe launching of the Convention machinery, which will guarantee the effectiveness and universality of the treaty.

The Convention has been put before the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation for ratification. The parliament has already begun to work actively on the instrument. In its message to the Conference the State Duma has expressed its intention to complete the ratification process if possible in the autumn of the current year, while underlining the importance of taking into account issues of significance for Russia in the decisions of the Conference.

In the period leading up to ratification of the Convention, Russia intends to refrain from any actions which would detract from the purpose and goals of the Convention. Since the time of signature we have honoured, and will continue to honour, our obligations not to develop and not to produce chemical weapons; not to transfer them directly or indirectly to anyone; not to use chemical weapons; not to carry out any military preparations for their use, or to assist, encourage or induce anyone to engage in any activity prohibited under the Convention; and not to use chemical riot control agents as means of warfare. We have taken steps to ensure that toxic chemicals and their precursors are developed, produced and acquired, stored, transferred and used only for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. Preparations are also under way in Russia for the actual destruction of chemical weapons. Federal legislation for the elimination of such weapons has been adopted.

We intend to maintain close relations with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and to discuss issues of cooperation with its leadership. Russia would be ready to provide OPCW with information on its stocks of chemical weapons and their location, and to take part in measures to provide assistance where possible in CW protection and in economic and research cooperation under articles X and XI of the Convention. It is our view that this will be facilitated by the establishment of machinery giving Russia an opportunity to participate in the drafting and adoption of decisions

taking into account its political and defence interests. All this would also create conditions for Russia's entry into OPCW in such a way that it could immediately play a full role in the organization's activities. I hope that the first session of the Conference will carefully address the issues we have raised.

I wish the participants in the first session success in their arduous efforts to settle matters before the Conference in the interests of peace and international security.

B. Yeltsin

Moscow, Kremlin, 6 May 1997

FEDERAL ASSEMBLY - PARLIAMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

APPEAL

FROM THE STATE DUMA

to the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction

On the occasion of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, referred to below as the Convention, and the opening of the first Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, referred to below as the Conference,

Affirming its commitment to the obligations assumed by the Russian Federation regarding the destruction of chemical weapons,

Wishing to contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Convention,

Acknowledging the need to rule out completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons, in the interests of mankind as a whole,

Recognizing the enormous international significance of ratification of the Convention by the Russian Federation and the United States of America,

Appealing to the Conference in accordance with its powers,

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation:

Reaffirms its positive attitude to the need for the complete elimination of chemical weapons, as displayed in the adoption of the Federal Chemical Weapons Elimination Act by the State Duma on 25 April 1997;

Affirms that it has embarked on the process of ratification of the Convention, with the intention of completing the process if possible in the autumn of this year if the necessary conditions are met;

Notes that difficulties involved in the ratification of the Convention stem from the exceptionally serious economic situation in Russia, while forecasts for economic development in the near future make it impossible to count on a sharp increase in funding to tackle this problem;

Calls on the Conference to foster the creation of favourable conditions for speeding up the process of ratification of the Convention by the Russian Federation.

The State Duma considers that the following actions would facilitate completion of the process of ratification of the Convention by the Russian Federation:

An effort by the Conference to consider the possibility of extending the deadlines for elimination of chemical weapon stocks, and to take account of the interests of the Russian Federation when addressing other issues, including the procedure governing payment for inspection activities in order to reduce the financial burden on the receiving party, and the conversion of former CW production facilities;

A call on States parties to the Convention by the Conference for a substantial increase in financial assistance to the Russian Federation on the part of States parties to the Convention, and a search for additional sources of such assistance, inter alia using the financial capabilities of international organizations.

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation ca ls on the Conference to regard the circumstances preventing the Russian Federation from ratifying the Convention as cases of force majeure, and accordingly to help it, during the period pending ratification of the Convention by the Russian Federation, to play its due part in the drafting and adoption of key decisions, and to play its role in the governing and executive bodies of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation affirms that the decision on ratification of the Convention will also be taken in the light of the outcome of consideration of issues of significance to the Russian Federation at the first session of the Conference.

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation conveys to the Conference its wishes for fruitful work in the interests of peace and disarmament, and also expresses its hope for understanding and the constructive solution of the above-mentioned issues, thus facilitating ratification of the Convention by the Russian Federation.

Moscow
25 April 1997